

HOW LEGENDS ARE BORN



Sleace Anderson.

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CONTENTS

Introduction

The Psychology of Chess Sets

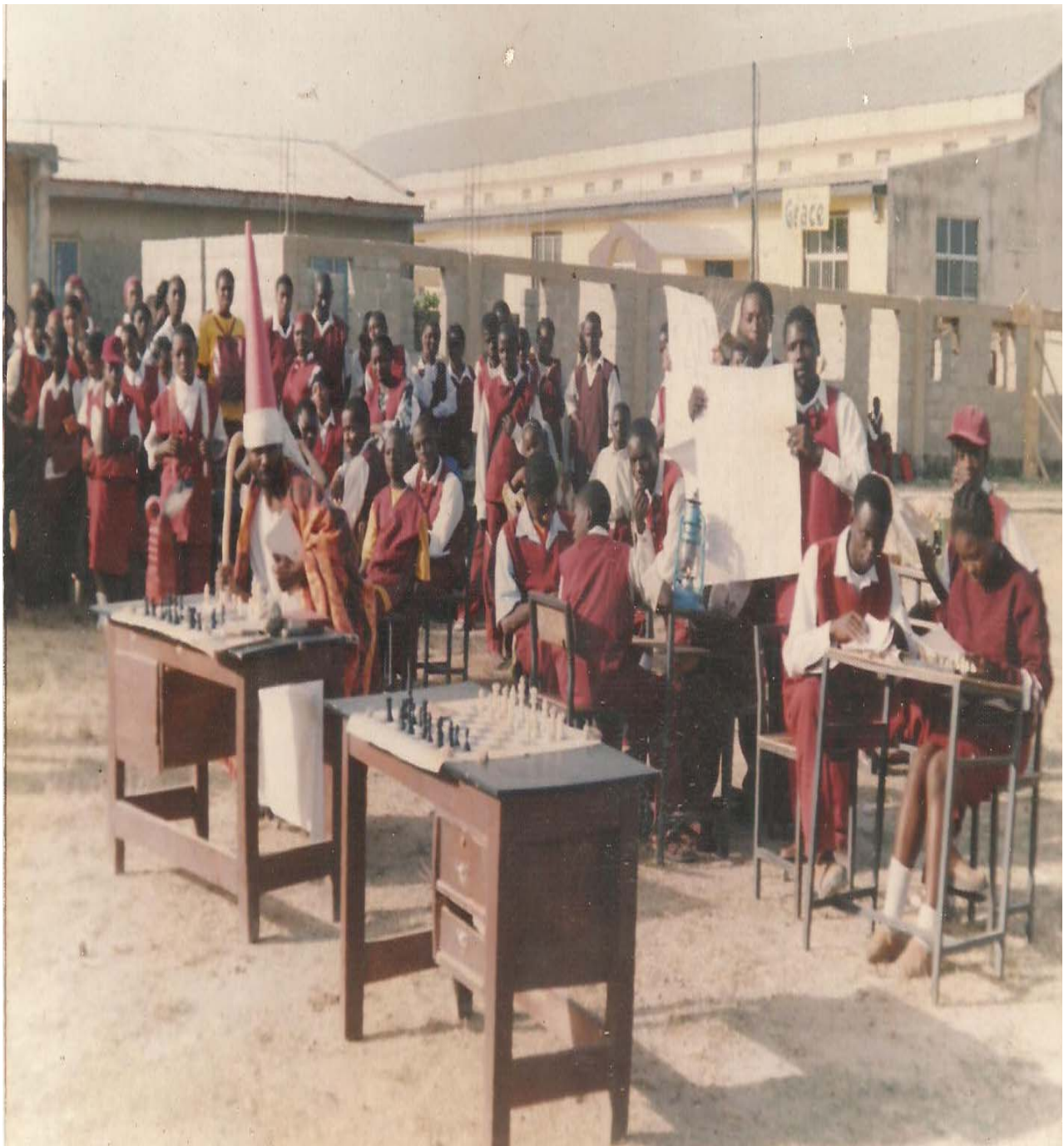
The Principles of Opening Play

The Role of Intuition in Chess

General Observations in the Endgame

Otoronto-Geramino-Max Defence

Glossary



**Sleace Anderson, Chess Exhibition, God's Time Comprehensive Secondary School, Zaria,
2006**



Sleace Anderson, Inner Circle Members, Business Youth Club, Zaria, 2007



Sleace Anderson, Benue State Chess Team, National Sports Festival, Garden City Games, 2011.

INTRODUCTION

All things must needs have a cause, a motive power an animating principle, actuated by a desire to educate and uplift the souls of men.

It is the task of the human spirit in these lower regions, through the power inherent in it, to open everything that stands below it as much as possible to the influence of the pure Radiations of the Light; and thereby, as a mediator through which the stronger pressure can operate, to dispense blessing to all else, because it can receive this higher pressure and distribute it as a purifying element that destroys all uncleanness! True art, which outlives the ages, is an example of the fulfilment of this task!

Only that part and that ability is developed and maintained which is used!¹ How Legends are Born is a Grandmasterpiece for seekers and the righteous alike. Behold I come as a thief. Blessed (is) he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Welcome to Chess!

1: Abd-ru-shin, “In the Light of Truth”-The Grail Message. Stiftung Gralsbotschaft, Stuttgart, Germany

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CHESS SETS

Chess play had been characterized by attacks against enemy kings until the publication of *L'analyse du Jeu des Echecs* by Francois-Andre Philidor (1726-1795) in 1749. Players learned to postpone immediate attacks against the enemy king in favour of intermediate goals, such as:

- Conquest and control of the centre
- Rapid development of the pieces
- Good pawn structures

The art of defending against premature attacks rose to new heights in the games and writings of Wilhelm Steintz (1836-1900), who was the first official World Champion¹.

Conquest and Control of the Centre: The centre (d4 e4, d5 e5) is the most important part of the chessboard. Pieces placed in the centre attack more squares than those positioned on one side of the board to the other. It is often difficult to maneuver pieces from one side of the board or the other if you do not control and occupy your fair share of the centre. Classical theory suggests that this is the optimal positioning of the centre pawns and minor pieces (d4 e4, d5 e5; Nf3 Nf6, Nc3 Nc6; Bc4 Bc5, Bf4 Bf5). Operations in the centre may proceed once the king's safety is secured.

Rapid Development of the Pieces: There is an element of time in the game of chess, and in the opening stages of the game it is referred to as development. The key to development is to move your pieces to their optimal squares as efficiently as possible. Determining which piece belongs where depends largely on what moves your opponent has made.

The principle of rapid development was evident in the games of Paul Murphy (1837-1884), and codified in the writings of Siegbert Tarrasch (1862-1934). Tarrasch emphasized the dynamic mobility of the pieces over the relatively static positioning of pawns. It was considered important to get the minor pieces (Knights and Bishops) out before developing the major pieces (Rooks and Queen). Ideally you would make the minimum numbers of pawn moves that allowed you to develop all of your pieces from their original squares.

With regard to pawn placement in the centre and near it; the knights are usually best developed with Ng1-f3, Nb1-c3, ... Ng8-f6 and Nb8-c6. The bishops with Bc1-f4 (or g5 or e3 or b2), Bf1-c4 (or b5, or d3, or e2, or g2), ... Bf8-b4 (or c5 or d6 or e7 or g7), ... Bc8-g4 (or f5 or e6 or b7).

The rooks are best developed on usually d1(c8), e1(e8), c1(c8) or f1 (f8) and best on open or semi-open files. The queen usually develops only after all minor pieces have been developed and castling (usually kingside has been made). One of former World Champion Jose Capablanca's (1888-1942) maxims was to develop at least one Knight before bringing out the Bishops.

1: James Eade, *The Chess Player's Bible: Illustrated Strategies for staying ahead of the game*, Batsford, United Kingdom, 2004

Good Pawn Structures: Pawns are usually strongest when they stand next to one another on a rank, and often when they are defending one another on a diagonal line, especially when the line points towards the centre of the board. The general structure of the White and Black pawns determines the strategy and tactics of the game. The following pawn formations indicate strengths or weaknesses:

- **Pawn Chains:** When two or more pawns are connected diagonally, they are called a chain. A pawn chain can be very powerful because it can restrict the mobility of the enemy pieces and pawns; however, the base of the chain is its weakest link.
- **Pawn Islands:** When group of pawns are separated from one another they are called Pawn Islands. “Less is more” in this case, the side with fewer islands is usually stronger.
- **Pawn Majority:** Healthy pawn majority constitutes a potential advantage because they may be used to create a passed pawn. Simply the threat of creating a passed pawn may be sufficient to force the opposition into passivity.

The pawn majority concept may best be divided into three major categories:

1. Queenside pawn majority (2 pawn vs. 1, 3 pawns vs. 2 or 4 pawns vs. 3)
2. Kingside pawn majority (2 pawns vs. 1, 3 pawns vs. 2 or 4 pawns vs. 3)
3. Centre pawn majority (2 pawns vs. 1)

A three versus two pawn majority is slightly preferable to four verses three pawn majority because a passed pawn may be generated more quickly. We may begin to assess these properly only in the middlegame, after the opening phase of the game has concluded, by carefully examining the pawn structure. When referring to the ‘pawn majority’, we assume a healthy pawn chain rather than a deformed pawn structure. Double pawns for example would not fit well into advantages of having a mobile pawn structure.

Practice shows that, for example, with both kings castled kingside, the side with the (mobile) pawn majority on the queenside may generally consider it as an advantageous element in the overall evaluation of the position.

The advantages of having a mobile pawn majority mainly lie in having an opportunity to create a passed pawn. Such mobile pawns can further severely limit the mobility of the opponent’s pieces, thus ensuring a lasting initiative for the side activating its superior pawn phalanx.

As a rule, when advancing one’s pawn majority, the first pawn to move should be the one with no opposing pawns on its file and adjoining files.

General advice relating to the pawn majority attack revolves around:

1. Creation of a passed pawn, followed by
 2. Pawn promotion and
 3. Execution of material advantage
- **Pawn Minority:** The pawn minority concept may as well be divided into three major categories:
 1. Queenside pawn minority (1 pawn vs. 2, 2 pawns vs. 3, 3 pawns vs. 4)
 2. Kingside pawn minority (1 pawn vs. 2, 2 pawns vs. 3, 3 pawns vs. 4)
 3. Centre pawn minority (1 pawn vs. 2)

A mobile pawn minority may prove itself a valuable offensive weapon in the middle game phase of the game, as soon as pieces have been developed.

When conducting a pawn minority attack, make sure you have at least one of your knights at hand and best two. One will serve to control and occupy an outpost created while the other may serve as backup and a defence to own's king. At least two major pieces will be necessary to acquire the desired material advantage.

It is equally important to monitor and be able to predict opponent's counterplay, which often consists of similar pawn advances, usually motivated by an attack on the castled king.

The pawn minority attack requires not only knowledge and understanding of the basic elements involved but also the understanding of various types of pawn structures such as isolated and backward pawns, as transformation into these structures will happen in most probability.

- **Passed Pawn:** A passed pawn is a pawn with no enemy counterpart in its path, either on the same file or adjoining files. Pieces tied down by a pawn are rarely at their best. Passed pawns are dangerous and enemy forces must frequently be used to neutralize the threat.

The blockade of a passed pawn is to physically stop it from advancing by placing a piece directly in front of the specified pawn. It is necessary to blockade a pawn to ensure that it will under no circumstances be pushed.

The pawn could be deliberately sacrificed to activate pieces behind it and allows them to enter the game. Thus, it is crucial to obstruct the path of a passed pawn. A piece

stationed on the blockading square is protected from “frontal attack” by the very same pawn that was such a threat.

The blockading square is a ‘weak point’ for the enemy. The blockading piece maintains a strong post and retains the ability to move in certain situations, highlighting the principle of elasticity: the principle of elasticity states that the blockader is not confined to one square but can travel and return to blockade again (Nimzowitsch)!

A passed pawn is an extremely important element of positional chess and poses a very frightening threat to the opponent. Passed pawns often give the position tactical potential. If they can be correctly blockaded, however, passed pawns lose much of their value.

The mobilization of all possible forces to counter attack is one of the methods to fight versus structures with the advanced passed pawns. It is absolutely necessary in all positions with passed pawns to calculate accurately and tempi are of the utmost importance.

- **Outside Passed Pawns:** Passed pawns on a- or h-files are also called outside passed pawns. They are especially useful for distracting enemy pieces. However, they cannot by themselves or with the aid of a king drive an enemy king away from their queening squares.
- **Protected Passed Pawns:** A passed pawn that is defended by another pawn is called a protected passed pawn. The strength of the forwards pawn is still determined by its mobility; but it is at least relatively immune to capture.
- **Isolated Pawns:** A pawn is considered isolated when there are no pawns of the same colour on adjoining files. If isolated pawns come under attack, they may constitute a weakness, because they have no neighbouring pawn to assist in their defence. The square immediately in front of an isolated pawn cannot be attacked by other pawns and may become a nice perch or outpost for an enemy piece. However, the positive sides of the isolated pawn can be determined as follows:
 1. It offers greater control of central squares
 2. It offers the possibility of a central strike by its advance
 3. It offers a space/spatial advantage
 4. It offers opportunities of exploiting the open and semi-open files it creates with its presence.
 5. It offers better and quicker development, especially in the opening.
 6. It offers the initiative in the opening and middlegame.

- **Backwards Pawn:** A backwards pawn is not technically isolated, but it has been left behind by its peers. Its advance cannot be supported by neighbouring pawns. Although no enemy pawn stands directly in its path, its advance is constrained by one on an adjoining file. Backwards pawn were considered serious weaknesses by classical school. However, a well-timed advance of the backward pawn can cause a fair amount of havoc. As with any other weakness, a backward pawn often requires the defence of stronger pieces.
- **Hanging Pawns:** The term refers to a pawn island consisting of two united pawns on half-open files. One of the pawns must be on one of the four central files. Hanging pawns occur most commonly on the c- and d- files. They may be strong if they are mobile and help to control key central squares especially if the pawns are supporting an attack against the enemy king. However, if one of the pawns advances, the trailing pawn may become backward and weak.

Hanging pawns can control important squares and guarantee a space advantage. If the formation of hanging pawns is supported by actively developed pieces, then there are good prospects for an attack on the enemy king. If the formation is not supported by harmoniously developed pieces, this pair of pawns can be attacked and destroyed.

One very important strategy to be used against hanging pawns is to force the advance of one of the pawns; the second pawn becomes backward and weak. Instead of controlling the squares in front of them, a hole appears that the opponent can occupy.

As a general rule the owner of hanging pawns should keep pieces on and stay in the middlegame, whereas the opponent of the pawns should aim for exchanges. As the endgame approaches, hanging pawns become a liability.

- **Doubled Pawns:** Two pawns of the same colour on the same file are called doubled pawns. Doubled pawns towards the centre are generally strong during the middle-game, when the control of central squares is most important. However, doubled pawns suffers a slight lost of mobility and lose the ability to protect one another. They can be especially weak if they are isolated from the rest of the pawn chain and when they form part of a pawn majority on the side of the board, as it becomes more difficult to make a passed pawn.
- **Tripled Pawns:** Tripled pawns are simply three pawns of the same colour on the same file. Doubled pawns happen all the time, but tripled pawns are an infrequent occurrence.

The same issues of reduced mobility that affect doubled pawns are even more prominent with tripled pawns. They are relatively easy to attack, and defending all of them at once can turn into quite a burden. However, they can be advantageous in certain situations. They have even appeared in game 7 of the World Championship match Symsof-Botvinnik, Moscow 1954. Symsof had the tripled pawns and still manage to emerge victorious.

THE PRINCIPLES OF OPENING PLAY

Openings, unlike the middle-game and the endgame, demand perpetual study, refreshment and proper information. When entering higher-level competitions, the objectives of the opening play of a chess player changes. Playing as White for an advantage and playing as Black for equality were the main objectives for many years, until former World Champion Robert Fischer successfully practiced a more ambitious approach of playing for the advantage, regardless of piece colour, and in each game. Thus, a popular strategy became creating dynamic imbalances from the earliest phase. The ‘Sicilian Defence’ became and stayed the most popular and effective method to counter White’s 1.e4.

Other opening schemes developed their own imbalanced variations, such as is, for example, the ‘Winawer’ variation of the ‘French Defence’. Players with a universal style adopted strategies including playing types of opening positions which do not suit their opponents and thus cause discomfort. Various transpositions of moves, starting with one opening and ending up in another, were discovered to that objective.

The opening play is merely the development of the pieces, and the more rapidly and judiciously this is effected the better; from a mistake in the opening – assuming both players to be of equal strength – it is difficult to recover. At the commencement of the game, only the knights and pawns can move so our first task is to give our other pieces freedom and then to get them on to good squares for both attack and defence. A good square may be described as one on which a man is well placed to take part in the coming battle, and where he has mobility or freedom of movement. A man’s mobility may be limited by enemy men who oppose it or by friendly men who gets in its way, or both.

As a rule the pieces should be so developed that they attack directly or indirectly an adverse piece. This ‘gains time’ as the opponent is obliged to make a defensive move, thus allowing the first player to bring another piece into play. In general superior development nearly always provides opportunities of finding shortcut to victory by brilliant sacrifices.

The following opening principles must, therefore, be observed at the commencement of play:

1. The first principle is to develop the pieces quickly and never to commence an attack with insufficient forces. Develop the minor pieces before the major pieces. It serves as a better chess strategy to develop knights before their respective bishops. The mobilization of every piece to its natural optimal square should be completed as rapidly as possible, thus ensuring a middlegame abundant with various tactics and strategical advantages to enjoy. The number of developing moves will further provide us with a possibility to easily evaluate a position as being either balanced or favourable, with chances of an attack or material gain through a combination.
2. Always try to maintain at least one pawn controlling or occupying the centre or best both. The ideal central pawn structure in the opening is e4+d4 (e5+d5), with the pawns both

occupying and controlling/pressurizing the central squares. Progressive chess players may further best consider playing viable White's alternatives 1. d4 or 1. c4 or 1. Nf3 .

3. Take control of the centre. 'The four squares e4,e5,d4 and d5 are the central squares and the control of these squares is called control of the centre. The control of the centre is of great importance. No violent attack can succeed without controlling at least two of these squares and possibly three. "Many a maneuver in the opening has for its sole object the control of the centre, which invariably ensures the initiative." - Jose Raul Capablanca.
4. Castle your king (into safety) as soon as possible. Castling is considered as an important developing move, as it also improves the position of the respective rooks involved. A simple (yet time-consuming), statistical query on a 5,000,000 games database reveals approximately 700,000 games with queenside castling and 3,900,000 games with kingside castling, with the remaining number of games violating the fourth principle, by leaving their king in the centre, where opening of the position clearly reveals many dangers to both kings, ones with which only adventurous and experienced players may hope to cope with.
5. Don't move a developed piece twice in the earliest phase of the game unless really necessary. It is most logical to have as many pieces developed before taking action. Moving a developed piece twice may be justified only in a few cases, such as capturing a traded pawn, or needing to move away from an attack or exploiting a serious mistake made by the opponent.
6. Don't be greedy by grabbing offered free material instantly. Playing instantly is in itself a mistake, with the highest regard to games played with standard time control. Beware when it seems as if the opponent has left huge material 'enprise'. As the 'free piece' is not going anywhere, it is always good to double-check whether a trap has been set, whether purposely or accidentally.
7. Watch over your f2/f7- squares. Two most vulnerable squares in the early opening phase of the game are undoubtedly the f2 and f7 squares, protected only by the respective king. Many strategies have been developed to unleash an early attack on these squares, disregarding the principles of opening play, with the only aim of winning the game quickly by checkmate, ignoring the fact that the attacker is objectively playing poor chess. It is important, especially when playing with black pieces, to recognize these premature attacks, and learn how to refute them, and best before they happen.
8. Don't make unforced exchanges such as those which develop an opponent's piece. Exchanges usually favour one side or the other, even if only slightly. Consider the men to be exchanged, particularly if a bishop is involved. Which man is better placed or is likely to become stronger.

Once the principles of opening play have been mastered, one can proceed to developing and maintaining a sound opening repertoire.

THE ROLE OF INTUITION IN CHESS

Openings can be learnt by heart and reproduced by memory; endgames may often be won by Mathematics; but the middlegame in chess is chess itself, for it is here that the intuition of a player asserts itself. Those who could support their intuitive choices with precise calculation have the ability to 'sense' the best continuation without spending a lot of time on the clock.

Intuition is the ability to see the final point of a given path in complete obscurity, chosen essentially through the foundation of the experience of the individual. Intuition is thus the art of finding and understanding the essence of the position and automatically seeing the move in our mind. This art helps us to evaluate accurately and profoundly the critical position of the game in which a correct decision has to be taken. For example, the decision to exchange on f6/f3 and the decision to improve or exchange our worst piece. Intuition is refined by a combination of study and practical play. Without intuition, analysis alone cannot produce result!

Three types of intuitive decision exist in chess:

1. Combination
2. Positional
3. Prophylactic

COMBINATIVE INTUITION: A sequence of moves designed to carry out a specific objective is called a combination. Combinations usually rely on tactics in order to achieve the objective and often contain sacrifices. There are many combinative themes that reoccur in chess. Every strong chess player has the ability to recognize these combinative patterns:

- **Deflection:** Deflection is a very common tactical theme. As the name suggests, deflection distracts a piece away from its primary responsibility.
- **Destroying the Guard:** Sometimes a single piece is holding a position together. A sacrifice in order to capture that piece often pays dividends.
- **Overloading:** A piece can sometimes bite off more than it can chew by doing too many things at once. An overloaded piece can be exploited by forcing it to abandon one responsibility in order to address another.
- **Decoy:** A decoy is used to lure a piece to a poisonous spot. The lure is usually a sacrifice that must be accepted.
- **Interference:** Interference occurs when you force your opponent's pieces and pawns to block themselves. Pieces that were co-operative turn into their own worst enemies.

- **Windmill:** The windmill (or see-saw) is a deadly combination of checks and discovered checks. A helpless king is forced to toggle between two squares while his army is demolished.
- **X-ray:** The x-ray tactic exploits a player's control over a square that appears to be controlled by the opponent's pieces.
- **Zwischenzug:** A German word normally translated as an "in between move". It is a move played instead of a seemingly forced one. The natural capture-recapture balance is disturbed.
- **Pin:** When a piece is attacked and cannot move without exposing a second, usually more valuable, piece to attack, it is said to be pinned. The queen, rook and bishop are all capable of pinning pieces, but the knight and pawn are not. When the second piece is the king, it is called an absolute pin, because the pinned piece cannot move without exposing the king to check, which is not permitted by the laws of chess.
- **Forks:** A fork is a type of double attack. One piece attacks two simultaneously. Any piece or pawn can be used to fork others, but the knight fork is the most common.
- **Skewer:** The term skewer describes an attack that forces a piece to move, exposing a second piece behind it to capture.
- **Double Attack:** A double attack usually occurs when one move creates separate attacks by two different pieces.
- **Discovered Check:** A discovered check occurs when the movement of one piece allows a second stationary piece to give check. This can be a very powerful maneuvering because the first piece can wreak havoc as the check must be dealt with.
- **Double Check:** A double check occurs when a discovered check is combined with a second check by the moving piece. There is only one way to respond to a double check: the king is forced to move.

POSITIONAL INTUITION: Factors that are more strategic in nature are often referred to as positional considerations. These are the building blocks of chess mastery. The intent is not to launch an early violent attack, but to gain some strategic advantage, which can only be exploited over time.

The following strategic factors are the building block of chess mastery:

- **Open Files/ Half Open Files:** Open files are those which are free of any pawn and half open files are those where one of the players doesn't have any pawn but his opponent does. The easiest way to activate a rook is to create and control an open file.

Sometimes the control of the open file, particularly central files, serves to restrict the opponent's mobility. When both sides try to control the open file a bishop maneuver can be very useful.

The most typical way to take control of the open file is to place both rooks on it (doubling). Sometimes even the queen can be used to triple on the open file.

- **Double Rooks:** The struggle for control over an open file has determined the course of many a game. One way to establish control is to put both rooks on the same file. This is called doubling.
- **Tripling:** When you add the queen to the same file as the doubled rooks, you get tripling.
- **The 7th Rank:** If your rooks can successfully invade the enemy position along the 7th rank you will usually secure a significant advantage. A rook on the 7th rank may attack pawns that have remained on their original squares and the king may often be trapped on the 8th rank and vulnerable to attack.
- **Luft/Escape Square:** It applies most commonly to the castled king. If there is any vulnerability to a back rank mate, creating luft by moving one of the pawns in front of the king is a wise precaution (h3/a3, h6/a6).
- **The Bad Bishop:** If your pawns are on the same colour squares as your bishop, they may restrict its mobility. Since a piece's power is directly related to its mobility, an immobile bishop is worth less than a mobile one, and is termed a bad bishop. If you must place your pawns on the same colour as your bishop, try to make certain that the bishop is in front of the pawns and not behind them.
- **The Good Bishop:** A bad bishop is often tied to defence as its freedom of movement is limited by friendly pawns on its path. A good bishop, however, has freedom of movement, work well with friendly pawns, and can easily move about looking for target and choosing the movement to attack them.
- **The Two Bishops:** If you have both your bishops, and your opponent does not, you are said to have the advantage of the two bishops. It must be pointed out that this advantage exists primarily in open positions. The value of the knights increases in closed positions, when the bishops' mobility decreases. However, it is easier to open a game than to close it, and the two bishops represent an advantage more often than not.
- **The Bishop-pair:** An important point to consider in most positions with the bishop-pair is the pawn structure and the existence of pawns on both sides of the board. There are many possible pawn structures. We will classify them as following: Open centre, Semi-open and Closed centre. The position with two open vertical files on the centre and more is called open positions. This provides the best condition for the bishop-pair.

The dominating long-range power of the bishop-pair can be use in developing all kinds of attack and initiatives.

With only one open vertical file in the centre (he so called semi-open centre), the recommended strategy of playing with the bishop-pair should be partial exchanges in combination with developing an initiative, or attack, on a certain side of the board.

In positions with completely closed centre, the strength of the bishop-pair goes down significantly. We have to make sure, that the opponent's pieces (e.g knight) have no good outpost squares, and the only way to use the bishop-pair is to place them on the most active squares (the longest diagonals, for example) where they will support the strategy of gaining space.

In general, the bishop-pair gives an advantage in all kind of strategical positions. The level of these advantages is usually in proportion to the openness of the position. The more open space in the centre, the stronger the bishop-pair.

- **Blockade:** One of the knight's best attributes is its ability to blockage or prevents a pawn advance. Pawns can only move forward and are unable to attack the square in front of them. If a pawn cannot move, it may hamper the mobility of the other pieces.
- **Outpost:** When a piece is placed on a square on which it is protected (most often by a pawn) and cannot be attacked by enemy pawns, it is considered to be located on an outpost.

Outposts are extremely valuable as they control enemy territory and can often be a deciding factor in the result of the game. A player may go to great lengths in order to secure an outpost and place there his or her piece because that piece will be far stronger than its counterpart.

A knight or bishop for example, placed on an outpost in the enemy position, constitute a potential threat. Any piece can be placed on an outpost, be it knight, bishop, rook or even queen.

Although it is possible for the opponent to exchange the piece on the outpost, this often results in the creation of a passed pawn.

- **Levers:** Levers are pawn moves that help to pry open a position. Since pawns cannot attack the square in front of them, they need assistance in combating hostile forces positioned there. Levers are useful tools whenever a position is blocked by pawns.
- **Partnership:** Practice has proved that rook and bishop cooperate very well and are usually stronger than rook and knight. On the contrary, the queen is the best partner of the knight and this partnership may often prevail against queen and bishop.

- **The Initiative:** If you can consistently force your opponent to react in specific ways to your moves, you are said to have the initiative. The initiative can be lost with a single passive move.
- **Counterplay:** Equilibrium exists on the chessboard before the game begins, but it is disturbed when White makes the first move. This move gives White early initiative. Black may seek to re-establish equilibrium with each response meeting (1. e4 with 1...e5 for example) , but modern theory suggests that it becomes more difficult to continue to do this as the game progresses. An alternative would be to inject imbalances into the position, so that it becomes more difficult for white to profit from the right to move first. Imbalances produce greater practical chances for the second player. Counterplay thus is the essence of successful defence.
- **Key Squares:** Some squares assume more importance than others during the course of the game. The struggle for control over such squares often dictates subsequent play. Undefended squares in your position are like having a hole in one's protective armour. In fact, these squares are often referred to as holes. If the pieces and pawns are especially poorly coordinated, they may result in what is called a weak-colour-complex squares. When key squares can be controlled by one player's pawns and not the other, they are called outposts. Knights in particular relish outposts and gain considerable strength when posted on one in the centre of the board.
- **Sacrifices:** A sacrifice is a deliberate loss of material. Sacrifices add greatly to the pleasure of the game. One can get a lot of satisfaction out of allowing a piece to be captured in order later to force an advantage. One merit of a sacrifice is that it often comes as a surprise to the second player and the unexpected is always a little disturbing. The beauty of a chess game is usually appraised and with good reason according to the sacrifices it contains.

There are many possible sacrifices. We will classify them as Positional sacrifice, Exchange sacrifice and Clearance sacrifice.

1. **Positional Sacrifice:** A positional sacrifice involves trading a piece of higher value for a piece of lower value, or for no material in return, benefitting in the long run with various types of positional gain which involve, but not limited to:
 - The demolition of opponent's pawns near their king, whether castled or uncastled.
 - The creation of two mobile connected passed pawns.
 - Superior control of the centre.
 - Space advantage.
 - Creation of disharmony among opponent's pieces (inclusive of pawns).
 - Taking the initiative.

- Quick development of the pieces.
- Opening of files, ranks or diagonals.
- Artistic value.

Any chess piece except the king can be positionally sacrificed. Positional sacrifices should not be confused with tactical sacrifices where the side sacrificing benefits shortly afterwards.

2. **Exchange Sacrifice:** The exchange sacrifice is one of many which connect chess with art. The 'hero' of the exchange sacrifice is the rook, offering itself for an opponent's minor piece (knight or bishop), either by capturing without 'fear of its life' or staying put when attacked by the same. This sacrifice immediately resulting in a relatively '-2' point count, is practically often accompanied with various 'bonuses' such as (among others):

- Damaging the opponent's pawn structure
- Winning a pawn on the next move, limiting the material loss to a mere '-1' only.

The exchange sacrifice may be positional or tactical in nature. Positional exchange sacrifices in the middlegame are mostly motivated by the creation of a protected passed pawn and the creation of an outpost for a minor piece. Tactical exchange sacrifices are most often targeted against the opponent's king by removing a defender, or weakening the pawn structure in pursuit of checkmate.

3. **Clearance Sacrifice:** When your own pieces are preventing you from carrying out a winning maneuver, you might consider a clearance sacrifice. The piece that is gumming up the works is sacrificed to make room for a more opportunistic one.

PROPHYLACTIC INTUITION: Prophylaxis consists of the prevention of the opponent's threats and the preparation and support of our own plan. Prophylaxis denotes activity, in the sense that it is necessary to stop opponent's improvement with active measures. For example, a central pawn structure strongly limits the ability of opponent's pieces to play a significant role on some other part of the board.

The first step in prophylaxis is to see the opponent's intentions and the second to take proper measures against them or simply to continue our own plan if there are no opponent's threats.

In modern chess the meaning of prophylaxis is very wide and contains different forms and measures. Generally, there are three forms of prophylaxis:

- Elementary Prophylactic
- Prophylactic Elimination of Tactical Threats
- Prophylactic Elimination of Strategic Threats

Elementary Prophylactic: Elementary Prophylactic deals with direct threats, weaknesses of the back rank, unpleasant pins and other immediate problems in the position. This involves prophylactic moves like h3 or a3, making luft for our own king, moving the king into the corner to avoid attack on the diagonal g1-a7 for example.

Prophylactic Elimination of Tactical Threats: Tactical threats deals with exchanges of the important pieces and the creation of our own more dynamic tactical threats. Prophylactic elimination of tactical threats also involves:

- Moving the King, Queen and Rooks away from the Bishops' diagonal squares.
- Moving the King and Queen away from the Rooks' files and ranks.
- Positioning the King, Queen and Rooks on different colour squares to eliminate the threats of the Bishop's pin and the Knight's fork.

Prophylactic Elimination of Strategic Threats: Strategic threats involve exchange sacrifices, positional sacrifices and clearance sacrifices. It also deals with limiting the mobility of the opponent's pawn structure and activity of the pieces.

In general prophylactic moves involves taking active measures against opponent's intent!

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS IN THE ENDGAME

‘Pawn endings are to chess what putting is to golf’ – CJS Purdy¹. You may have the most powerful drive in the game and your approach sublime, but if you can’t put the ball in the hole you will not go any where as a golfer. So it is with chess. If your endgame is not up to scratch you will soon be found out as you rise through the ranks. Our sense of danger must be on high alert when only pawns are left, lest the position spit in our face.

The following observations should be kept in mind throughout the opening and middlegame. This will help to make correct decisions:

- In the land of pawns, the king is the boss. Without an active, aggressive and positive use of the king, pawn endings cannot be played successfully.
- Pawns are usually strongest when they stand next to one another on a rank, and often when they are defending one another on a diagonal line, especially when line points towards the centre of the board.
- Any type of pawn weakness is going to be magnified in a pure pawn endings. Isolated, doubled, tripled, backward and hanging pawns are to be avoided like the plague. The more the pawn islands, the worst the endings.
- As far as possible, pawns should be used to control squares on which adversary pieces would be well placed – particularly in the centre and around the king’s positions.
- If you are one or two pawns ahead, exchange pieces but not pawns.
- If you are one or two pawns behind, exchange pawns but not pieces.
- The smaller the pawn majority, the easier it is to make a passed pawn.
- Passed pawns should be blockaded by the king.
- The only piece that is not harmed by watching a pawn is the knight.
- A distant passed pawn is half the victory.
- Advance your passed pawns as rapidly as possible.
- The side that ‘queen a pawn’ first is often in the position to win quickly.
- Train your rooks together on weak pawns.
- A rook on the 7th rank is sufficient compensation for a pawn.
- The rook and king must be kept active. Passivity means defeat.

- The queen is best used as an attacking piece. Centralize the queen.
- Two bishops verses bishop and knight constitute a tangible advantage.
- Bishops are better than knights in all except blocked pawn positions.
- Weak squares inherited in the opening can certainly form the basis for endgame defeat.
- One weakness in the enemy camp might not be enough to win. Stretch the defence by creating a second weakness.
- Active pieces is the key both in attack and defence.
- Counterplay is the essence of successful defence.
- You must bring all the pieces into play whenever possible.
- Mounting and sustaining pressure is the way to force mistakes.
- Pay quite as much attention to the probable plans of your opponent as to your own.
- Do not lose time in studying when you have only one way of capturing, but capture quickly.
- Avoid scattering your pieces; as they get fewer concentrate them upon a key square as much as possible.
- If playing against an inferior, complicate the game; if with a superior, simplify it.
- Open your game at all times upon a regular plan; by so doing you will acquire method in both attack and defence.
- Triangulation or repetition of moves is part of the strategy in prosaic endgames. Not only does it allow a player to understand the position better, but it also put psychological pressure on the defender. That pressure often pushes the opponent to weaken his position further. Nowadays, when we get additional time for every move, it allows us to accumulate time. Triangulation is a king maneuver that accomplishes this loss of time.

Remember that the science of the game consists in so moving your pieces at the commencement of play as to obtain a position which will compel your adversary to give his men away. One man ahead with a clear game should be a certain win!²

1: FIDE Trainers' Commission Chess Syllabus, FIDE, Greece, 2010

2: Sleaford Anderson, The Art of Chess for Seekers: A Machiavelian Guide to the Empire of the Mind, A.B.U Press, Zaria, 2007

OTORONTO-GERAMINO-MAX DEFENCE

Chess is a very individual business. Success in the game is decided not only by talent, but also other qualities, including the attitude of a player.

It is well known that excessive self confidence that borders on a lost of impartiality in assessing one's potentialities is a poor ally in a difficult contest. But it is equally known that without conviction in oneself, there can be no rapid advancement or genuine tournament successes.

The basis of the Iyefu Legend at 7, as a chess player, are her results in the series of games that propelled her to:

- 32nd Nigerian Breweries Plc International Open Chess Championship, Lagos, 2009.
- 5th Benue State Sports Festival, Makurdi, 2010.
- 17th National Sports Festival, Garden City Games, Port Harcourt, 2011.
- Professor Wole Soyinka 1st Masters Simultaneous Chess Exhibition with British Grandmaster, Nigel Short, Abuja, 2011.
- World Chess Olympiad Trials, Abuja, 2012.
- CACDEC/Africa Zone 4.2 Individual Chess Championship, Abuja, 2012.

Reminiscing on her ingenuity and intuitive perception as a young chess mistress, Iyefu Onoja showed herself to be an accomplished fighter, demonstrating amazing composure, precise calculation and noble naturalness. Against an aggressive player she strives either: (a) to gain the initiative, even at the cost of material – to sacrifice a pawn and play as though nothing has happened or (b) to restrict the opponent's pieces as much as possible by exerting pressure over the whole board.

While leaning towards a tactical struggle, the young mistress is also good at maneuvering, at building positional microscopic advantages, and at waging a prolong siege of the enemy position. She devotes perhaps the main attention of deploying her bishops in active positions and directs the game towards a corresponding endgame.

The Otoronto-Geramino-Max Defence is one of the young mistress' favourite openings with Black!



Gm Nigel Short vs. Iyefu Onoja, Otoronto-Geramino-Max-Defence, 2011

GLOSSARY

- **Active:** (i) A description of a move that increases a player's mobility; (ii) a description of a piece that is mobile.
- **Back rank mate:** A checkmate delivered by a rook or queen on an opponent's first rank, when the king is trapped behind pawns.
- **Centralization:** The act of bringing pieces to influence the centre.
- **Counterplay:** The act of injecting imbalances into the game.
- **Combination:** A series of forced moves leading to an advantage.
- **Castling:** A move involving both the king and a rook.
- **Capture:** Taking an opponent's piece with one of your own.
- **Development:** The movement of pieces off their original squares.
- **Diagonal:** Any continuous line of squares along which a bishop can move.
- **Exchange:** (i) The trading of equal amounts of material, (ii) the capture of a rook by a bishop or knight.
- **Escape square:** A square to which a checked king can move.
- **Endgame:** Also called the ending. The third and the last phase of the game, following a significant reduction of material.
- **FIDE:** The acronym for the International Chess Federation (Federation Internationale Des Echecs).
- **File:** Any of the eight columns on a chessboard.
- **Fork:** An attack on two enemy chessmen at the same time.
- **Half-open file:** A file on which only one side has a pawn.
- **Hole:** The square directly in front of a backwards pawn.
- **Initiative:** The term used to describe the advantage held by the player dictating play.
- **Luft:** German for "air", a flight square for the king.
- **Majority:** A numerical superiority of pawns on one flank or the other.
- **Mobility:** The ability to move one's pieces about the board freely.

- **Open file:** A file that has no pawns.
- **Outpost:** A piece in the opponent's territory supported by a pawn and unable to be driven off by an enemy pawn.
- **Opening:** The beginning part of a chess game when the objective is the development of the pieces.
- **Passive:** (i) Description of a move that contains no threats, (ii) description of a piece with limited mobility.
- **Pin:** A tactic that immobilizes one piece or a pawn.
- **Promotion:** When a pawn reaches the 8th rank it must be exchanged for a piece, usually the queen.
- **Rank:** Any horizontal row on the chessboard.
- **Sacrifice:** To deliberately give up material.
- **Strategy:** The long-range plan.
- **Tactics:** A move or set of moves that produces a short-term advantage.
- **Tempo:** Latin for "time". To lose a tempo is equivalent to losing a turn.

HOW LEGENDS ARE BORN

- Behold, I stand at the door and knock. Work while there is light, the night cometh when no man can work.
- An attack is likely to succeed only if it starts from a good position. A good position is one in which the men are strongly posted for attack or defence, work well together and do not get in one another's way.
- We must not rely on the likelihood of the adversary not coming but on our own readiness to meet him; not on the chance of his not attacking but on the fact that we have made our position unconquerable.

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